

Ted Dekker brings speaking tour to Toronto this fall

Popular author will speak on living life outside the law of death

by Lisa Hall Wilson

New York Times best-selling author Ted Dekker will be at Toronto's Catch The Fire Church on November 2 for a free, all-ages event with special guest Tim Neufeld and the Hallelujah Glory Boys.

Ted Dekker is the best-selling author of more than thirty books, and his books *Thr3e* and *House* were made into films. Dekker grew up in the jungles of Indonesia with missionary parents and upon returning to the United States climbed a corporate ladder where he did very well financially. Dissatisfied with that life, Dekker sold everything to pursue his dream of writing full-time and hasn't looked back. His books have sold more than five million copies worldwide.

Dekker's novels are characterized by fast-paced plot twists, violence, and explore spiritual truths and questions with sometimes disconcerting honesty. The two-hour event will feature former Starfield frontman Tim Neufeld with the Hallelujah Glory Boys, and Dekker will speak for about an hour. The speaking tour coincides with the release of his newest novel *Outlaw*. Fans will have an opportunity to buy the new book and get it autographed by Dekker.

Dekker's father is Dutch-Canadian, but this will be the first time Dekker's visited Canada in more than ten years. I spoke with Ted Dekker about the upcoming event via phone from his Austin, Texas home.

When asked what fans could expect at the Toronto event, Dekker said he's coming to speak to Christians about living life outside the law of death. "So many Christians, from my observation, live defeated lives, that aren't different at all from our neighbours who might not have the same beliefs. What does it mean to live a transformed life? What does it mean to live in the freedom that we have as the sons and daughters of God, as his children? This is the heart of my new book *Outlaw* [set to release on October 22]."

A 2006 study done by the American Barna Group reported that "61% of today's young adults - had been churched at one point during their teen years but they are now spiritually disengaged... Only one-fifth of twentysomethings (20%) have maintained a level of spiritual activity consistent with their high school experiences."

This is an issue very close to Dekker's heart, for many of these disaffected twenty and thirty somethings continue to read his novels, though they won't read traditional Christian fiction. Millennials, raised in a hyper-media culture, have high sensitivity to pretense and fakery and low tolerance for hypocrisy of any kind. Dekker, quoting the Barna study, believes his books with his brand of raw honesty, spiritual authenticity, and a willingness to explore the dark themes and supernatural elements this new generation of adults are drawn to, bridges the gap.



Ted Dekker

"Most of those who read my books are like me, trying to understand their faith in an authentic way. They're attracted to my stories because they feel very real and deal with the kinds of questions that we really struggle with in our lives. Not just platitudes and Sunday School stories that don't have a lot of connection to our everyday lives, and our greatest fears and struggles." This is a hot-button issue of sorts for Dekker and he leans into our conversation. "I write stories as a person who grew up in a Christian faith to understand that faith."

Is this why he writes thrillers, why so many of his books incorporate or explore the Occult or supernatural? "I'm very real with myself and my characters. My books have been very dark because at times I've been looking for the light in the dark, the demonstration of that power."

Dekker goes on to explain that writing thrillers allow him to explore the answers to his own questions through the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of his characters. Every novel is a reflection of his own

spiritual journey. "Thrillers allow me to put characters into extreme situations to see how they react. Thrillers allow me to explore more extremes. I think young people speak the language of extremes and experience more extremes than older generations. I think that's why I gravitated towards thrillers. Not all my books are thrillers," he clarifies that he also writes fantasy and has two non-fiction books out. "All [my novels] have elements of thrillers in them."

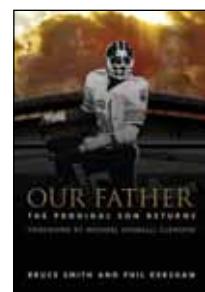
I reveal that my favourite novel of his is *Adam*, a supernatural thriller, and he shares that his book *Water Walker*, set to release March 2014, is similar to *Adam*. Many people found *Adam* very disturbing, as in keep-you-up-at-night-with-the-lights-on-Stephen-King-style. I'm reminded of a quote from Dekker's 2004 release *The Slumber of Christianity*: "Christian writers must paint evil with the blackest of brushes, not to sow fear, but to call out the monsters to be scattered by our light. Any attempt on our parts to minimize evil is only complicit with this strategy."

As we discuss this, Dekker points to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane to explain why he writes such disturbing things. "The last days of His life, Jesus was put into a situation where He was so fearful of what was to come that He sweat blood, He agonized. He faced that fear, walked into it. He didn't run from it. The only way to overcome fear is to face it. The only way to know death is only a shadow is to walk into the valley of death. It's not 'Yea, though I run away from the valley of death.'"

Dekker promises he'll be sharing from his own experiences of some very difficult times at this event. "You just might see a whole new you, and if you do — it'll change your life forever."

Tickets for the event are available beginning September 15 from www.funandfaith.ca.

Castle Quay releases new title on Fatherlessness



Our Father: The Prodigal Son Returns
By Bruce Smith and Phil Kershaw
Foreword by Michael Pinball Clemons
Castle Quay Books
210 pages, Softcover

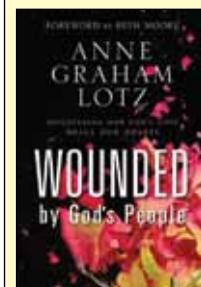
Castle Quay Books has announced the release of its newest title by Bruce Smith and Phil Kershaw with a foreword

by Michael Pinball Clemons entitled *Our Father: The Prodigal Son Returns*.

Our Father chronicles the life of Bruce Smith, former pro football star and real estate magnate turned pastor. The story begins with his childhood following his biological father's abandonment of his family, and details his life growing up in segregated Texas. His odyssey takes him from Huntsville, Texas to Colorado and finally to Canada, but the specter of being fatherless haunts him well into his forties until a spiritual awakening changes everything. Bruce writes that "Where I grew up, there were lots of mothers and grandmothers. They acted as the patriarchs. It wasn't that lots of men weren't around. There were just very few fathers, who represented any definition you would find in a dictionary."

Anne Graham Lotz explores Christians hurt by friendly fire

Wounded offers prescription for healing through God's Love



Wounded by God's People
Discovering How God's Love Heals Our Hearts
By Anne Graham Lotz
Zondervan
240 pages, Softcover

Recent research indicates that the majority of non-churchgoers actually label themselves Christians. Most often, those same people cite hurtful incidents suffered within the church as their reason for not participating in organized religion. Hypocrisy within the Christian church clearly has left deep, painful wounds on many of its own people. Best-selling author and world-renowned evangelical leader Anne Graham Lotz explores the ways that Christians wound one another and the ways that we can stop the cycle of harmful words and actions.

In *Wounded by God's People*, Lotz draws on the biblical story of Hagar, a young Egyptian slave with whom Abraham had a son named Ishmael, to illustrate her point. Hagar stood out because she was wounded - not physically, but in ways that were as emotionally and spiritually painful as any injury to a body would be. Some wounds were provoked by her own bad behavior, but others were inflicted by those who considered themselves God's people.

Anne Graham Lotz, too, has been wounded by God's people. Some wounds have been deeper than others, some have come out of nowhere, and still others have been provoked by her own behavior, but all of the wounds have been deeply painful. They seemed to hurt even more when the wounding wrapped their behavior in a semblance of religion or piety. Lotz shares these deeply personal stories with readers. She knows from experience that wounding is a cycle that needs to be broken, and by God's grace, it can be.

Because God loves both the wounded and the wounding. The book also includes a foreword by Beth Moore.

Our Father is a must-read memoir exposing the 'number one issue' facing society today. Fatherlessness impacts our society in significant ways that Bruce Smith and Phil Kershaw skillfully expose.